



# Post-Travel Health Care Advice

## T R A V E L F A C T

Most persons who acquire viral, bacterial, or parasitic infections abroad become ill within 6 weeks after returning from international travel. However, some diseases may not manifest themselves immediately. Therefore it's critical to be in tune with your health even after you return home.

### **Post Travel Check-up**

A routine medical examination is not required after an uneventful short trip, or if a traveler only suffered a trivial ailment. However, an examination may be advisable after an extended stay or if fever, diarrhea, vomiting, jaundice, urinary disorders, or skin or genital infections occur in the weeks following return from travel. During an evaluation, it is important to review your itinerary for all trips over the past 12 months. This may provide important clues as to the possible illness, especially since it may be something encountered infrequently in the United States. A post-travel medical evaluation is also recommended if a traveler was hospitalized for any medical illness during their trip, spent three months or more in rural areas of the developing world, or were involved in activities overseas which exposed them to increased health risks, e.g. health care workers, veterinarians, etc. During the Post-Travel Exam the physician will re-evaluate the person's health, and document any changes and check for the presence of infection that could have been acquired traveling.

### **If you traveled to a malarial area**

After your return from travel in a malarial zone, be sure to follow your health care provider's instructions on the completion of your anti-malaria medication. The risk for malaria does not end immediately upon your return.

Malaria may not cause symptoms for as long as 6 months to a year after a traveler returns home. If you develop a fever at any time during the first year after your return (especially in the first two months) seek medical attention immediately. Remind your

health care provider that you could have malaria, even if you took anti-malarial pills.

### **Post-Travel Fatigue**

If your feeling off-balance after your travels, chronically depressed, headache-prone or weary, you may be suffering from the post-travel fatigue. Post-travel fatigue is fairly common in the returning traveler. However, in some cases, post-travel fatigue is not necessarily something you can just 'snap out of'. There are many medical possibilities for these symptoms. If you're really low, forget self-diagnosis - go see your health care provider. Particularly if you have traveled for more than three months in rural areas of developing countries, you may have a sufficiently high risk of a parasitic, viral, or bacterial infection to justify screening.